

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

June 5, 2001

Upon Recess of BMA

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll. There were fourteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, Hirschmann

Messrs.: Solicitor Clark, Kevin Sheppard

Mayor Baines addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Resolution:

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to Make Certain Budgetary Closings for the Year 2001.”

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted that the Resolution be read by title only, and it was so done.

Alderman Thibault moved that the Resolution ought to pass and be Enrolled. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

TABLED ITEM

**4. Contingency request – Building Maintenance Division
(Tabled 4/17/2001)**

This item remained tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Wihby stated I wanted to talk about a couple things about the budget, your Honor, can I bring it up here in Finance.

Mayor Baines replied sure.

Alderman Wihby stated yesterday in one of the recommendations we did was to move \$1 million from CIP Cash to the School budget and Frank gave me a call today that there is a problem with \$36,000 of that because it really wasn't committed from School yet they have to hurry up and do that, so by the time School was to vote it's for the lockers and stuff that this Board has already voted on five times for Gill Stadium. So, I told him what we'd probably do at the next meeting is move \$964,000 over and leave the \$36,000 where it was, so then we could take care of the locker rooms and nobody has to complain about it. But, one of the concerns I have, your Honor, and we heard School Board Members today talking about it...you gave me money and now I'm going to have to move it and I don't think it was the intent of this Board to put that \$1 million or \$964,000 now from CIP Cash into anything else other than maintenance that was scheduled. So, what I would like is to have the Highway Department come back with a list...the list has already been approved for the million dollars that they should submit that to the School Board and get some sort of approval that, in fact, that is what they are going to do with that million dollars before we okay the budget on Monday because the intent that they weren't going to spend that money for anything else, if we had kept it the way it was they wouldn't have that control, their projects have already been done and I'd like to have some assurances that if we are, in fact, going to transfer it over to them they are going to do the list that Highway has. I don't know if you need a motion for that, your Honor, but before we vote on it on Monday, I would want some assurances that they're going to use the million dollars of the \$964,000 for the intentions they had already said they were going to use it for.

Mayor Baines stated I think the best way we could do it, if we could submit a letter to the Board because the Board is meeting Monday night and ask the Board to go on record as supporting that. So, if the Board would like to move that...

Alderman Wihby stated I think Highway should present a list to them within the next day or two with what that million dollars is and maybe they could vote on that...we're meeting before their vote on Monday, right.

Alderman Hirschmann stated whether it's on one side of the budget or the other you come out with the same tax impact, but we have guarantees that it stays a maintenance item if we put it back where it was. I see no benefit to any one of us to move it, David, I really don't. I would prefer, to everyone's benefit, that it stays on the other side where it was and gets used to fix up all of the school buildings. If the School District got into tough times they could use that for salaries or whatever they want, it's their money. So, we should put it back.

Alderman Wihby stated the reason why we had moved it was because the million dollars was outside of their budget and it was not going to be recorded on the School side, it was being recorded on the City side. They weren't going to have to put it on their MS form or anything else in Concord or charge it to the tuition that the children reimburse back to the City. So, we put it where it should be charged to them and I think with the motion of just letting them get back to us that they are going to use it for the purposes that were outlined, we're covered. Once we get the assurances that they're going to use it for that if they don't do something when we get the calls we'll have the letter saying that it was going to be used for that. But, if we don't change it it's not going to go on their side of the budget, you're not going to get the extra tuition reimbursements and it's not going to be recorded as a School expenditure, but a City expenditure.

Alderman Hirschmann asked wouldn't it become a chargeback item.

Alderman Wihby replied no, not the way it was.

Alderman Hirschmann stated just like the laborers you're putting in under the PBS budget...those labor positions get charged back to their budget.

Alderman Wihby stated that is not the way it was presented in the Mayor's number as a chargeback...it was presented that we were going to keep it on the City side and pay for it out of the City even though it was used for School.

Mayor Baines stated could I just ask if we could ask the City Solicitor to review that whole issue and see if there is some way that we can accomplish that because I tend to agree with Alderman Hirschmann on that. We discussed it before come forward with the budget, I just wondered if we could take a look at that one more time.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think we're in consensus here and we all know that one of the biggest problems the Schools have is the maintenance, it's more of an aesthetic thing...getting these places nice and cleaned up, painted and everything. If we have to eat that million dollars because we can't have a chargeback that to me doesn't matter. I don't care about the chargeback, I care about getting these things done and having these buildings refreshed and painted. So, I would just say that we should...I'll be looking to amend that motion back over to the City side.

Mayor Baines stated if I could work with the City Solicitor on this by Monday and maybe we can come in with some proposal.

Alderman Hirschmann stated later on in the agenda we're ready to move on the CIP appropriation, so that million dollars isn't in there. So, that number's a problem.

Alderman Wihby stated we were expecting on tabling that just in case the number changes before we pass the budget.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated my understanding is that some of the Aldermen wish to have that tabled until Monday, so they will have time to work on it.

Mayor Baines stated that would work out fine then.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I certainly support your effort to have the City Solicitor intervene, I think we're in a classic Catch 22 here because Alderman Wihby is correct in order for this to be charged off properly it has to go to the School side, but it comes down to the classic example of we don't have trust enough in the School side based on what's happened the last couple of years, so I think perhaps the City Solicitor could be the one to work it out. There was another point and it reverts to that same kind of idea of the School District and I went home last night and thought about it. When we got to the Tax Collector's line we're going to give \$37,000 for a new employee only if the School Board agrees to do it. Why couldn't we just cut the School budget by \$37,000 ourselves and in this instance give that to the Tax Collector directly. Couldn't we do that in this instance.

Alderman Wihby stated they're still not going to get charged for it.

Mayor Baines stated there is not a magic way to handle the situation.

Alderman Gatsas in reference to the \$36,000 for the lockers that we have voted for for about five times. Is this on the expedited items or is this...

Mayor Baines stated, Mr. Sheppard, come forward please.

Mr. Sheppard stated that money is being done with Cash, it was identified in Cash and will be available July 1st, but we've actually talked to contractors and we're executing contracts to get that work done. We're going to pay the money out of one project and reimburse that project come July 1st, so that work can be done.

Alderman Gatsas stated the work will be done before.

Mr. Sheppard replied that is the intent.

Alderman O'Neil stated while we're talking budgets, I've brought up a number of times we have positions throughout the City, for the lack of a better term, CIP projects. Some have a home and some don't and just for consistency I think we accidentally put one home last night with the Archivist, it was a CIP project that position...I think Alderman Wihby in his recommendation to put it funded it in the Clerk's Office and gave the position a home. I've asked it a couple of times, I've been told that somebody's going to look at this and figure out what positions... these are just some that I'm aware of possibly the ADA Coordinator, the Planner at Parks and Rec, the Facility Engineer, the Destination Manchester, the EAP Director...that they may not be formally in departments, it doesn't cost the taxpayers a dime. There's a revenue to pay for it and their expenses are the same.

Mayor Baines stated again can we ask the City Solicitor to work with me on that for a recommendation on Monday night on those.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think some are permanent and placed in departments just by chance, so it would be better for the employees if they have a home.

Mayor Baines stated you work on the list and we'll work on giving them a home.

Alderman O'Neil stated there might be more out there that I'm not aware of.

Alderman Wihby stated to follow-up on our discussion yesterday. Did we write to the departments and ask them to let us know before Monday what the half percent cut will mean to them.

Mayor Baines replied the letter went out, the Board members should get a copy and they're due back with the responses by tomorrow.

Alderman Wihby asked when we get the agenda for Monday can we have a list on that agenda of the ones who plan on speaking that they can't live with that number, so that we'll know on Friday when we get the agenda who's going to speak on Monday. I just want to go back to the chargeback number also. I know Frank had some concerns that he's got a list again of chargebacks that he's got to get some sort of a number before July from the schools that they are going to go ahead and do some of these things. For instance, a School Board member spoke today about the extra janitors; that we had put in their budget to be able to do. Frank has that on his chargeback number and in order to hire these people and get them on he's got to have some sort of commitment from Schools and the same thing with putting on the extra plumber and two painters that we had discussed yesterday in order to do all of that stuff within the chargeback number he has to have some assurances that Schools is going to pay or he is not going to put that in. It would be nice to have that list on Monday also before we okay a budget whether or not they are going to go ahead with those chargebacks that have to deal with the Highway Department.

Alderman Pariseau stated I think you're asking for a lot, Alderman.

Alderman Wihby stated Frank has the list all he has to do is send it over to Schools.

Alderman Pariseau stated you're not going to get an answer from the Schools.

Mayor Baines stated I think, at this time, Mr. Thomas needs to set up an appointment with the Superintendent and try to get that ironed out by Monday.

Alderman Wihby stated maybe the Superintendent can be here on Monday also to answer some of those questions.

Mayor Baines stated there's a School Board meeting Monday.

Alderman Wihby stated well, your Honor, if you're going to be here he can be here.

Alderman Shea asked are we going to have a written confirmation, what do we have to do in order to verify what they say they're going to do they're going to do or not do.

Mayor Baines stated you know what's going to happen Aldermen is that they are going to get their final appropriation and then they are going to sit down and decide what they're going to do with their appropriation because all we can do is give them the bottom line. I think it is worth a try, but I do not believe that you are going to get a commitment on those things by Monday night.

Alderman Shea stated then we have to make a decision ourselves if we don't get a decision from them.

2001 CIP Budget Authorization:

610401 Millyard II Transition Housing Program - Revision #2

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the CIP budget authorization.

Alderman Thibault asked why couldn't we hold this money away from the School budget and make sure these two painters and the plumber gets done.

Solicitor Clark stated the way the Charter sets up the School budget it's a bottom line, you can't identify money that's going to be theirs and hold it back. Once you've identified money that's theirs then they have control over it.

Alderman Thibault stated we have not identified that yet. What if we cut this amount before we give them their appropriation. Make sure that those two painters and that plumber is hired, we'll take care of it rather than have the School Board take care of it because we can't trust them.

Mayor Baines stated you could absolutely do that. The arguments that Alderman Levasseur made earlier...if you decide to fund it in the Public Building Services budget notwithstanding a chargeback you absolutely can do that.

Alderman Thibault stated if we did that then we'd be sure it gets done.

Alderman O'Neil stated we can put it on the City side, do the work...the only difference is we cannot charge them back for that money, correct.

Alderman Wihby stated it also affects tuition payments to the City.

Mayor Baines stated Mr. Clougherty has said over and over again that the reason that this exists is to allow that to go on the MS forms so they can collect money from tuition, right Mr. Clougherty.

Alderman Wihby stated the appropriate way of doing it is to get something in writing from them...right now, we're concerned with that million dollars that was in maintenance in CIP. I can't see why you can't get something from them to assure us (in writing) that they are going to do that.

Alderman Cashin stated why don't we do what Alderman Wihby is suggesting, let's give it a try one more try. We've got to have some faith here, it's got to stop...I know it's been difficult, but let's try it one more time.

Alderman Pariseau stated we've always had the faith, the School Department hasn't.

Mayor Baines stated I think the message is clear. Let's sit down tomorrow and try to delineate these concerns and ask to try and get a commitment from the School District, we'll certainly give it a try.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee